

RUSSIA ONE WITH YOURSELF

[content](#)

The country that our ancestors had been creating for over a thousand years fell apart. In this common cause of dozens of generations, there have been many heroic and saintly people, mistakes and sins. The structure nevertheless turned out to be strong - it took almost a century (maybe more) to destroy it. I doubt very much that the disintegration of the country, at least for one of the peoples inhabiting it, would turn out to be an early and undoubted benefit. But for the Russians, he is an obvious misfortune. I think that most of us, albeit completely unconsciously, at least in some corner of our souls felt our complicity in the grandiose thousand-year process, thus breaking free from the nonsense and triviality of life. Now this spiritual support has weakened. 25 million Russians ended up outside Russia. Siblings, parents and children are separated by state borders. The centuries-old economic ties have been severed.

1. COUNTRY DECLINE

Demands for further dismemberment of Russia are being heard. Stern voices in Stalinist style urge not to succumb to the "dizziness of success." And in a truncated form, Russia is still too strong for them; it can still feel itself as a "great Russia." She should not be allowed to do this: "Carthage must be destroyed!" And such an outcome is quite real - such powerful forces are pushing towards it, and there is so little resistance to them. But suppose that it is still possible to preserve Russia in the size of the former RSFSR (I hope this name will not remain!). How can we live when the USSR collapsed and Russia was left alone with itself?

Solzhenitsyn wrote that overtaken by misfortune, he found unexpected support in Russian proverbs: "We are with sorrow, and God is with mercy", "One died from fear, and the other came to life", "Trouble has come - do not disdain it." It seems that our "bad" is not entirely without "good". The relations of nations in the USSR have intertwined, it seems, into a ball, which the human mind is now unable to unravel. It was painfully difficult for those who are spiritually connected with this country to stop fighting for its preservation, even when the collapse was almost inevitable: the awareness of the tragic consequences of the collapse was combined with shame before history and ancestors for betraying their cause. Now fate has cut this tangle. And looking around after the first shock, we see that Russia, within its new limits, may turn out to be quite viable, where it is much stronger to stand on its feet, rather than the former USSR. Firstly, it is still a huge country, which at least partially preserved its richest natural resources. A country with a large and cultured population: more than in Japan; than in France and united Germany combined; more than Brazil and Argentina. But what is most striking is that the country is extremely homogeneous nationally. Of all fifteen republics of the former USSR, Russia ranks third (after Armenia and Azerbaijan) in terms of the share of the indigenous nation in the entire population:

81% of Russians and 86% of those who consider Russian as their native language. For comparison: the indigenous population of Lithuania is 79%, Ukraine - 71%, Georgia - 70%, Kyrgyzstan - 52%, Latvia - 52%, Kazakhstan - less than 40% (according to the 1989 census). Russia is now ethnically more homogeneous than Czechoslovakia, Belgium, Spain or Great Britain. Of course, In addition to Russians, there are more than 100 peoples living in Russia, and Russians, with such a numerical superiority, bear a special responsibility for ensuring that their cultural and spiritual life develops freely. But in any case, we have finally acquired the full right to speak about our Russian national interests (as a rule, coinciding with the interests of other peoples of Russia) and to pursue a policy based on these interests. We freed ourselves from the yoke of "internationalism" and returned to the normal existence of the national Russian state, which traditionally includes many national minorities. the full right to speak about one's own Russian national interests (as a rule, coinciding with the interests of other peoples of Russia), and to pursue a policy based on these interests. We freed ourselves from the yoke of "internationalism" and returned to the normal existence of the national Russian state, which traditionally includes many national minorities. the full right to speak about one's own Russian national interests (as a rule, coinciding with the interests of other peoples of Russia), and to pursue a policy based on these interests. We freed ourselves from the yoke of "internationalism" and returned to the normal existence of the national Russian state, which traditionally includes many national minorities.

Another undoubted benefit of the split that has taken place is that it will help to finally shake off the darkness of communism. Since the beginning of the 70s, I began to write about socialism and communism as a path to death (of course, in samizdat, with a reprint in the West). And the hardest thing for me was to challenge the objections of those who loved this country and feared its death. They said: no matter how bad the Communist Party is, it is the only brace holding such a multinational whopper. It cannot be destroyed until other uniting forces are created. Now, fortunately, there is no longer any need to argue about this. The USSR collapsed, there is now nothing to unite here, but for Russia and the Russians, the party has always played the role of the main destroyer, sacrificing Russian interests for the sake of fomenting the world revolution, building socialism, helping communist China or international debt in Afghanistan.

But even within the new borders, Russia is still in a deep crisis, even in several, covering the most important areas of life. The most ominous seems to me: the rapid divergence, even the mutual repulsion (after the first hopes) of the people and the structures of power and signs that the collapse of the USSR may turn into the same collapse of Russia.

2. THE PEOPLE WAS AMONG THE VICTORIES

I remember the war, and it seems to me that even though life was harder then, the people were not so annoyed. Then they lived - some under the weight of the news of the death of loved ones, others in daily and nightly fear for them. In greater hunger and cramped conditions than now, in the most difficult working conditions. And yet, in the same queues and overcrowded buses, there was no such rush of dark waters of irrational anger that was ready to pour out on anyone from a neighbor to the President. Then I saw the goal for the sake of which all hardships were endured, and this goal raised, added strength. Now the people more and more feel themselves pushed to the margins of life. At least when interesting news is reported that a club of young millionaires has been registered - while potatoes have risen in price 20 times and it is just right to register clubs of beggars. The progressive press does not stand on ceremony with the people, warning of the need for "shock therapy", a new rise in prices, the appearance of tens of millions of unemployed. In an academic tone, like an impending lunar eclipse, the prospect of a rapid increase in mortality is discussed. The media are introducing the image of a "hero of our time" - a businessman or parliamentarian playing on the stock exchange, busy with foreign trips, and the owner of accounts in Western banks. Today - these are the winners, and the majority of the people ended up in the camp of the defeated, and they are sternly repeating the Roman - "woe to the vanquished!" The TV brings such a picture to every home, and the pugnacious, abusive, vulgar style of the media further inflames bitterness and irritation. In an academic tone, like an impending lunar eclipse, the prospect of a rapid increase in mortality is discussed. The media are introducing the image of a "hero of our time" - a businessman or parliamentarian playing on the stock exchange, busy with foreign trips, and the owner of accounts in Western banks. Today - these are the winners, and the majority of the people ended up in the camp of the defeated, and they are sternly repeating the Roman - "woe to the vanquished!" The TV brings such a picture to every home, and the pugnacious, abusive, vulgar style of the media further inflames bitterness and irritation. In an academic tone, like an impending lunar eclipse, the prospect of a rapid increase in mortality is discussed. The media are introducing the image of a "hero of our time" - a businessman or parliamentarian playing on the stock exchange, busy with foreign trips, and the owner of accounts in Western banks. Today - these are the winners, and the majority of the people ended up in the camp of the defeated, and they are sternly repeating the Roman - "woe to the vanquished!" The TV brings such a picture to every home, and the pugnacious, abusive, vulgar style of the media further inflames bitterness and irritation. the owner of accounts in Western banks. Today - these are the winners, and the majority of the people ended up in the camp of the defeated, and they are sternly repeating the Roman - "woe to the vanquished!" The TV brings such a picture to every home, and the pugnacious, abusive, vulgar style of the media further inflames bitterness and irritation. the owner of accounts in Western banks. Today - these are the winners, and the majority of the people ended up in the camp of the defeated, and they are sternly repeating the Roman - "woe to the vanquished!" The TV brings such a picture to every home, and the pugnacious, abusive, vulgar style of the media further inflames bitterness and irritation.

"But the people got freedom, and now they will not exchange it for any good," they will object to us. But, first of all, the freedom to put a lump of sugar in a glass of tea just disappeared. And secondly, there is no reason to value the people so low, for all our political unpreparedness, as to attribute to them the understanding of freedom as an opportunity to admire an obscene photograph in a newspaper or to revel in a whipping curse at high-ranking officials. Freedom is an opportunity to influence one's own destiny, but the people are deprived of it, as before.

"Public activity" in the form of rallies and demonstrations does not help to gain freedom - this has been shown by the history of the whole world, including the latest experience of our country. We take part in them - it's good if 1% of the population of the largest cities, and much less throughout the country. To enhance their impact, a well-known technique is used when a small rally on a TV program looks like an immense crowd or pre-recorded shouts of approval are broadcast over the loudspeakers. At the rally, they don't look for a better solution, they don't listen to different opinions. It exists to rally around a previously known program and as a tool for psychological impact on the rest of the population. At the rally, the people are transformed into a crowd. There is an extensive literature on crowd psychology. The authors agree that people united in a crowd acquire new qualities: a) The mood becomes highly contagious, the independence of judgment is lost. b) The feeling of one's own strength sharply increases, the consciousness of individual responsibility falls. c) Suggestibility grows, critical ability falls. d) The crowd easily obeys the "leaders". Two and a half thousand years ago, Plato wrote that the demos (crowd) is a special animal, and the demagogue ("leader") is a trainer who knows how to control it. Rallies and demonstrations are a tool for turning people into a crowd. Freedom is not found and realized there, but, on the contrary, is lost. Two and a half thousand years ago, Plato wrote that the demos (crowd) is a special animal, and the demagogue ("leader") is a trainer who knows how to control it. Rallies and demonstrations are a tool for turning people into a crowd. Freedom is not found and realized there, but, on the contrary, is lost. Two and a half thousand years ago, Plato wrote that the demos (crowd) is a special animal, and the demagogue ("leader") is a trainer who knows how to control it. Rallies and demonstrations are a tool for turning people into a crowd. Freedom is not found and realized there, but, on the contrary, is lost.

We also faced an old problem: how to exercise real freedom of choice through voting. To make a choice, information is needed, which means that those who provide us with information choose instead of us. Specifically, we saw: in order to be elected, you need to be able to get more time on television, print a lot of leaflets, mobilize agitators, write a tempting program. And all this by no means guarantees statesmanship, experience, and often even elementary honesty. Not so much by logical analysis as by feeling, the people absorbed this experience. Interest in the elections began to wane rapidly. It got to the point that a number of deputy seats remained unoccupied. In view of the repeated failure to appear at the ballot boxes of the required minimum of voters, further attempts were abandoned. Thus, another illusion was lost - the belief in the miraculous power of free elections. But this faith somehow brightened up life. As in other cases, we became convinced that the social institutions developed

by other peoples cannot be mechanically transferred to our soil: they must be grafted onto it by long labor.

There is still - mainly among some young people - a vague, irrational hope that some incomprehensible forces: "market relations" or "inclusion in the world economic system" returning travelers. Suddenly there will be good apartments, even their own houses, cars, tape recorders, color TVs and vidaks. But pretty soon it will become clear with ruthless persuasion that neither this generation nor the next (in their overwhelming mass) will see such a life. That at best, through hard work and hardships, in one or two generations we will be able to achieve a stable, albeit very modest living standard in a rather harsh life. And the moment of such realization will be a difficult test for our social structure,

3. THE RULERS ARE THE SAME

The real political life of recent years boils down to the fact that a rather narrow circle of persons controls the power, the composition of which is precisely unknown to us. Constitution, general elections, Soviets play the role of means, and sometimes just decoration. The structure of power is constantly being redrawn, bodies not provided for by the Constitution, new councils appear: presidential, security, state. The work of congresses is often mysterious: they change their position in 1-2 days under the influence of arguments and pressures that are invisible to us. A striking example is the extraordinary Congress of People's Deputies of the RSFSR, which was convened to demand an account of Yeltsin and even raise the question of confidence in him, and ended up giving him new powers. So in the Bible Balaam, who was called to curse Israel, blessed him. But an angel with a fiery sword stood in the way of Balaam.

Decisions are made through strange plebiscites. For example: do we want to introduce the post of President of the RSFSR or mayor of Moscow? Although their powers at this moment are not defined, so what the vote is about: do we like the word itself? And when it comes to a real issue, for example, the presidential election, the election campaign is given a ridiculous time limit of several weeks (in the United States - a year). The culmination was the preparation of the Union Treaty, which presupposed the disintegration of the country into 53 independent states with different state systems, foreign policy, finances, and their own armed forces - i.e. complete chaos and quick death. And the people were not allowed to this fateful decision in any way - neither through a plebiscite, nor through the elected Soviets. The agreement had to be signed by several people who were not competent to make decisions that change the constitution. And the text of the alleged agreement itself was declassified just 5 days before the alleged signing! Against this background, the August "putsch" looks like only one link in the chain of willful decisions of the people's fate. (I will leave aside the whole ocean of facts cited by the left-wing press and testifying that the putsch was generally a staged one). And the subsequent events, the "successful putsch" - when, for example,

the President of the RSFSR reassigned the troops, removed and appointed the head of the All-Union television, a new redrawing of power structures took place - all these are links in the same chain. Now, just like 20, 50 or 70 years ago, we are ruled by some narrow, closed layer, today more anonymous than before - before we could judge him even on the list of the Politburo.

What is this ruling stratum? Strange as it may seem, the same: the highest party functionaries. Almost all of them - a month, three months, or a year ago - announced their withdrawal from the CPSU. But these words did not change them themselves. A person, from the first youthful steps in the Komsomol, for decades reaching the top of the party apparatus, was subjected to such a monstrous treatment that now it is not in his power to change his psyche. For example, one of the few newspapers (the only one?) That retains the spirit of samizdat dissident publications - Express-Chronicle - reports at least seven political trials during the time when Yeltsin was the first secretary in Sverdlovsk. They were tried for recording Western radio broadcasts on a tape recorder, for an attempt to meet with Sakharov in Gorky ... According to the newspaper, the sentences were then coordinated with the First Secretary. And this is not a special reproach to Yeltsin - so, Probably, it happened in all regional committees and none of the secretaries thought that there was something to think about. This is now the ruling elite - the former:

General secretary, chief ideologist, first secretaries of republics, regional committees.

They are now dissolving the lower apparatus, just less ideologized communist, at least somehow connected with life. There is in this party some kind of law of periodic self-eating: the Bolsheviks are the Mensheviks, Stalin is part of the Bolsheviks. But vitality (and mortal danger to the life of the people) remains in the leading core. They will grow a new batch for themselves (they are already creating) and a new apparatus, like a cancerous tumor, starts up new metastases instead of the excised ones.

Immediately after the revolution, Lenin pointed to the role of the party of the proletariat as a bridle for the peasant element (80% of the people!); then admitted

that we do not have a real proletariat described by Marx, although there is a proletarian party, and then he noticed that the party's line is determined by the "thinnest layer" of leaders. This layer has survived to this day and still rules the country. And he, as always, thinks "internationally", i.e. considers the people only as a means to achieve their goals. More and more nakedly, even without any attempts to deceive, it is brought to the consciousness of the people that they cannot claim any other role. Of course, the people understand this more and more clearly. But how long can this continue?

4. ONE, INDIVIDUAL? ..

The forces that fought in the RSFSR for power with the leadership of the USSR used the separatist currents of other republics as weapons. As we know, the success here was complete. But it was naive to hope that such a process would stop at the borders of the RSFSR. He went further, in depth: all the new territories declare their sovereignty, "raising their status." Such a powerful, avalanche process that has engulfed the entire country must have some reason - although, of course, in different cases, specific influences are mixed. This is not a deepening of national self-awareness: we do not hear about the rise of national literatures, the rise of interest in the history of individual peoples. Acad. Likhachev connects the strife of Kievan-Suzdal Rus with the sudden appearance of many new cultural, economic and political centers. Our strife is played out against the backdrop of growing poverty and cultural decline. The reason is not even primitive economic egoism: if Yakutia can hope to get rich from diamonds, and the Khanty-Mansiysk Republic from oil, then what are Belarus, Estonia or Mordovia counting on? The conventional wisdom is hardly convincing either: oppressed nations are fleeing from the Russian colonial empire, the "prison of peoples." After all, Komi declared its sovereignty, where Russians make up 3/4 of the population, or Karelia, where there are 9/10!

Most likely, we are dealing with a disease of the state organism, which has reached the stage of disintegration. The disease lies in the fact that the state was communist. Everyone, including the Russians, is fleeing from his dead spirit. I am afraid that this is a tragic mistake: pulling apart the communist state, we get only a lot of non-viable communist states. Indeed, in the overwhelming majority of them, people from the highest party bureaucracy remain in power.

The entire painful process of the disintegration of Russia, and of the entire USSR, is the result of communist rule, Leninist-Stalinist nationalities policy. To consolidate the dominance of an ideology hostile to every nation, the most powerful nation was completely deprived of its statehood, while others, on the contrary, formally acquired the status of maximum independence. As a result, such an unstable structure was created that the existence of the country as a single state was ensured only by the domination of the Communist Party. Logically, the same principle is found in the beliefs of some Negro cults in Haiti. They believe that a sorcerer can kill a person and return from the grave in the form of a special half-living creature, a zombie, acting only at the behest of the sorcerer. Such a zombie was the USSR, created from the slain Russia.

If we consistently talk about overcoming the domination of communist ideology, then it is not serious to dwell on the banning of the party (with the immediate creation of its heiress, claiming money stolen from the people). All the more comforted by the renaming of streets and the overthrow of monuments (no matter how pleasant it is). It is necessary to revise the principles and, above all, to reject the Leninist-Stalinist nationality policy. In place of the USSR, built according to some terrible, inhuman principles, a normal state or states should arise - such as pre-revolutionary Russia and the overwhelming majority of the states of the world.

But one must be aware that a healthy state cannot admit the right to "independence up to the point of secession" of its parts. This principle, or rather, the slogan of the era of hopes for an early world revolution, did not lead to the collapse of the USSR only because the communist dictatorship did not allow it to be applied. But in no normal state of the world, no part of it has the constitutional right to secede. It is now clear that the USSR has ceased to be such a state. The process of its disintegration is irreversible - at least for the near future. But the disintegration is going deep into Russia and the real question, as it seems to me, is this: will it survive as a state based not on the principles of Leninist-Stalinist nationality policy, but on a normal basis.

In general terms, the problem raised by the cascade of "separations" is the following: is it possible at all for the existence of national minorities? Nations declaring their independence proceed from the impossibility, intolerance for themselves of such an existence. Paradoxically, declarations of independence only sharply exacerbate the problem. If in Russia national minorities make up less than 20%, in Tatarstan - 50%, Komi - 75%, Karelia - 90%, etc.

Most of these minorities are Russians. Throughout the post-revolutionary years, the national consciousness of Russians was under such severe pressure that now it manifests itself almost weaker than that of all other peoples of the USSR. Therefore, one could expect that states with a significant Russian national minority will be more stable. But even leaving aside considerations of justice, one must also see the shortsightedness of such hopes. Why doesn't separatism go inside these new formations? They are based on the same bomb that was laid in the foundation of our entire country back in 1918.

Modern civilization, focused on mass production, painfully perceives everything that is individual: in particular, the individual character of nations. But how are people kind, strong, musical, brave, etc.? - so there are more and less numerous nations living separately or surrounded by another, larger nation. It seems to me that it is impossible to run away from the concept of a national minority and, in principle, there is nothing flawed or painful in it. If they are not oppressed, then their representatives have a multifaceted, dual culture. For many peoples of Russia, entry into Russian culture was also the path to world civilization. For example, some famous writers of these peoples write in Russian, the works of others are translated into Russian - and this is how they become famous all over the world. History shows that living in Russia does not threaten the national existence of peoples (of course, only in comparison with other states: in the history of any country there was a lot of cruelty and injustice). After all, the current wave of sovereignty is possible only because many peoples have retained their national identity, being for centuries in the Russian state. But some of them are mentioned in our ancient chronicles - for example, Mordva. In contrast, the entire territory of East Germany, now reunited with West, was once inhabited by Slavs. And although some of their remains have survived, it would never occur to anyone to talk about the sovereignty of the Sorbs. The result of Anglo-Saxon colonization is even more dramatic: in North America, Australia, New Zealand. There really are no national problems - it was not a "prison of peoples"

5. RUSSIAN POLITICS

Two forces: the ever deepening disintegration of the country and the growing conviction that the authorities do not care about the troubles of the people, of course, will lead us to an imminent catastrophe, probably the final one.

The only way by which it is possible to hope for salvation is the development and implementation of a consistent national policy in Russia and even, oddly enough, Russian policy. The first necessary step should be the liberation of the country from the rule of party officials. This, of course, is not about the 18 million who were recently members of the party, or the 15 million who are still there - for very many, partisanship turned into only contributions and the boredom of meetings. What can you see "party" in a writer like Shukshin? But the layer of higher functionaries carries the invariable "genetic code" of the entire structure. Suppose (fantastic as it is) that all of them suddenly sincerely received their sight. But this means that they lived up to the leadership chairs and gray hair, not understanding what was clear to many teenagers or collective farmers from remote villages.

Tell me, who would have believed in the denazification of Germany if its president, prime ministers, and ministers (of the republic and land) were all recently at the top of the Nazi party, the SS, and then only announced their withdrawal from there?

Solzhenitsyn calculated that 86 thousand people were convicted in the processes of denazification in the FRG, and if you translate to us in proportion, you get a quarter of a million! We do not need now to either judge or persecute our former communist leaders, but getting rid of their power is necessary.

We have an Anti-Fascist Committee. In Italy or Germany, he would probably be needed. For us, it seems like a rather academic undertaking. The Anti-Communist Committee is really necessary, but it is more difficult and more dangerous, here real forces are involved. But the consequences of the 74-year domination of the communist ideology cannot be eliminated by any administrative measures. We must think over, feel all this past and, in principle, abandon the Leninist-Stalinist nationality policy, the Bolshevik policy in relation to the countryside and much more. And as one of the results of such a rethinking - to replace the representatives of the communist elite in the leadership with a layer of state-minded and nationally-minded leaders.

Only the new leadership is able to move on to a truly national policy. And one of the first actions should be the withdrawal of Russia from the (non-existent) USSR. This does not mean a complete break with other republics. We just have to take an equal position with them and not drag on ourselves the inheritance of the dirt and sins of the USSR.

Russia may consider itself the successor of Russian pre-revolutionary history, but certainly not the successor of the USSR, built on the slaughter of the Russian people. Otherwise, the horror that the communist monster inspires will be transferred to Russia. Remaining a part of Russia will seem to be the same as remaining in the

USSR. I think this is partly the way things are now, separatism within Russia - partly, this is flight from the USSR. This illusion must be broken.

And in a number of issues, Russia's withdrawal from the USSR will create a healthy basis for their solution. Only this step will make it possible to discuss on a fair basis the question of dividing the USSR's debts between its heirs. And only then the question of the protection of Russians in other countries, of the systematic support of Russian refugees, of which, alas, will become more and more, will arise with all clarity. The national position will make it obvious both the senselessness and the criminality of the participation of Russian troops in foreign national conflicts. There is no excuse for the death of Russian soldiers, for example, in Karabakh. Now, how is it fundamentally better than the Afghan war? In a streamlined form, similar words were pronounced, but the old things are happening - after all, "internationalist" thinking underlies the psychology of the current rulers of our destiny.

But the army needed to defend Russia must be retained, including the nuclear missile fist. When the "progressive world community" is confident that if it is capable of defeating Russia, then only at the cost of heavy losses, then it will not agree to this: their society is not inclined to make sacrifices.

It is necessary that the vague formula of a "single economic space" does not turn into a new way of squeezing funds out of Russia, already drained of blood. Pravda reports that starting from the new year Lithuania will pay Russia for oil, gas and coal 100 times more. And before that? Who, how, allowed our products to go virtually for nothing? The materialist will, of course, say that the answer is simple - a bribe.

But it seems to me that very simple solutions are rarely exhaustive. And if you look deeper, then it was not a pity to pay the last Russian ruble to stimulate the disintegration of the country. This message appeared immediately after Nevzorov spoke about such deliveries. Would it have appeared without it? And then the question is: what and through what borders is still flowing out of our already empty pocket? [The Vremya program reported that Russia's losses from trade with the "former subjects of the USSR" by the end of the year will amount to \$ 50 million]

The more ties remain between the republics of the former USSR, the easier it will be for all of us. But all the republics are equally interested in their preservation: it should not be at our expense. It is criminal to continue to burden the country with loans, on which our descendants will have to pay (most likely with the last fossils or already territories).

We must remember the politicians who scornfully and hostilely treat the oppressed Russians in Moldova and the Baltic states, who easily offer to give up the Kuriles or part of the Pskov region, who fasten us to the American wheelchair and quarrel with the Islamic world. Remember their names and make them widely known.

Only the government, based on the confidence of the people that it protects their interests, can now afford to be strong. And without a strong government, any of our economic reforms are doomed to failure.

We all see an example of "market relations" leading only to the most deplorable results for the consumer - this is any ordinary food market. Everyone knows the reason: the fact that a monopoly arises in the markets, which prevents prices from falling. And on a national scale, only strong state control can at the present stage ensure that market relations lead to an increase in production and an increase in living standards, and not to the enrichment of mafias and international speculators.

From the moment when we can trace the thought of our ancestors - when they began to express it in writing - we see that they perceived themselves not as Drevlyans, glades or Vyatichi, but as Rus. The scope of this concept was so clear to them that they did not bother to explain it (which is why later interesting discussions arose between historians). The dimensions of Russia changed - either expanding to the largest state of medieval Europe, then shrinking under the blows of the Mongols, then again expanding to the south and beyond the Urals. But the continuity of this concept has been preserved.

In the XIII and XIV centuries, after the Mongol raids, our ancestors - who survived - left the forests and began to rebuild the burned villages, cities, temples. The Rus of Yaroslav the Wise was reduced to a small North-Eastern fragment, which was also pressed by the Swedes, the Livonian Order and Lithuania. The Russians had at that time, perhaps, no less reason to give up than they do now. It might have seemed to them that Russia had perished, because the "Word about the perdition of the Russian land" was created. But they defended "Rus", which was so reduced at that time, and laid the foundation for many centuries of history, about which Pushkin later said that he would never want to have another in the world.

It is a disaster for the people if they give up while their cause is still not lost. But the determination to fight to the last for something that no longer exists can also become a disaster. As it seems, the USSR is non-existent at the moment - "Rus" in such a volume is no longer there. But after all the blows and defeats suffered by the Russians in this century, history offers us a more limited, but real task: to defend "Rus" to the extent in which it is still preserved. Maybe we have enough strength for this?

First published in the magazine "Our Contemporary" N 1, 1992

